



Reliability & Redundancy

In the business world, companies rely on the services around them to present a good image to their customers. If a company's suppliers cannot deliver a quality product, then it reflects poorly on the company itself. This being the case, communications products play a key roll in a perceived image of all businesses. When a cellular phone drops a call in the middle of closing a business deal, the potential for the deal to be lost is increased significantly. Add to that the time and effort it takes to establish these communications channels (setting up the meeting, getting the right number, connecting to the customer), and the telecommunications services that a company chooses become key to how well that company can do business. It is critical that quality services be chosen, and more critical that these services are guaranteed to be both reliable and fully redundant.

Reliability

Reliability is defined as being "consistent" and being able to "be depended upon with confident certainty." When you pick up your telephone, you expect to hear a dial-tone. If it is raining outside, or the weather is bad, it should not affect your telephone. In fact, even with the power out, it should be expected that your telephone works anyways.

AccuConference is an industry leader in reliability, choosing to use only top-tiered telecommunications carriers to supply service for our customers. Other "bargain" priced carriers use technologies that are still emerging, and not proven to be reliable yet (such as Voice-Over-IP, or VoIP). These carriers have chosen these less reliable solutions primarily to save money. Although the retail cost to the customer becomes slightly lower, the quality of the calls can also go down significantly. AccuConference utilizes only true fiber-optic telecommunications lines.

While more expensive, pricing is still very competitive with other VoIP-based carriers, and the difference in quality is where the value comes into play. AccuConference is still one of the lowest priced conferencing providers on the market, and provides a significantly higher level of reliability than the slightly lower priced VoIP providers.

Redundancy

Redundancy in a technical environment is key to providing backups for system failures. In a perfect world, every electronic system works all the time, with no issues. Realistically, failures of both hardware and services do occur. That's why AccuConference has taken steps to ensure that our systems remain up, despite any failure that may occur. Hardware failure (the most prevalent type in the industry) has been removed from our platform by providing backup (redundant) hardware for all levels of our system. AccuConference has stand-by conferencing bridges available to take the place of another bridge, should it fail. Database servers are backed up every 15 minutes to additional servers which conferencing systems can be switched to in real-time (meaning that the calls currently on the bridge do not have to be disconnected to switch to backup servers). AccuConference uses multiple top-tier carriers, with multiple entrance points to our facilities. Each conference bridge is only allowed to become 50% utilized at peak times.

In the event of a carrier failure, AccuConference systems remain fully functional on a single phone service provider. This also provides flexibility during unexpected "large" calls which our customers may schedule on short notice. Other carriers use multiple toll-free providers so that they can "cherry-pick" which areas of the country go to which carrier. For example: say that AT&T provides better rates to California, while Qwest is more competitive in Colorado. A carrier that uses both may choose to route all California traffic through AT&T and the Colorado traffic through Qwest. In the event of a failure of one of these carriers, an entire state would not be able to get calls through until the traffic was re-routed.

In contrast, AccuConference routes all traffic from the 48 states on a 50-50 split between two diverse carriers. As such, a single carrier outage will not shut down an entire state (or states). With this strategy, AccuConference is able to provide a fully-redundant system that continues to provide service to customers in the event of a major outage.

RESPORG Certified

AccuConference also recently became a RESPORG, which provides the ability to control the national toll-free database. Calls can be rerouted from one carrier to another at a moment's notice. The process of becoming a RESPORG is a complicated (and expensive) one, but AccuConference felt that the direct control of the toll-free database was paramount to providing the level of customer service and reliability that customers demand. There are only a few companies in the US that are RESPORG certified, with the largest being major carriers, such as AT&T, MCI, Sprint, and Qwest. Being RESPORG certified gives AccuConference more flexibility and greater control over managing the toll-free numbers, and as such, provides customers greater reliability. This technique allows AccuConference to manage traffic for small 2-3 person calls, all the way up to calls with 1000+ participants.

As an example of when this design has come into play, one of AccuConference's major carriers experienced a major fiber cut during the week of October 2, 2006. A construction crew drilling piers for a new building in downtown Atlanta sliced the fiber that provides AccuConference service (as well as a number of other customers) and pulled approximately half a block of fiber out of the ground, causing enormous strain to be placed on the fiber optic connectors. It took over 72 hours to bring the service back up. But AccuConference detected the outage within minutes, and due to the fact that the carriers were only utilized at 50%, was able to remain at full capacity on a single carrier. In addition AccuConference immediately rerouted all traffic to this new carrier so that customers would not experience any delays or problems connecting. The redundancy level that AccuConference maintains allowed services to continue operating normally, despite a potentially catastrophic (and rare) service outage by a major carrier.

This redundancy, when combined with a quality customer service department, allows AccuConference to offer the number one solution in the conferencing business. The product features are second-to-none, and when combined with reliability and redundancy, allow any business to be able to use and depend on the service functioning when they need it most. In today's business world, if a company cannot communicate clearly, accurately, and quickly with its customers, then the customers will simply find another company do deal with. Communications services are the most critical part of any business, and AccuConference can provide a major foundation for any company to use and to grow with.

Contact AccuConference at **800.977.4607** and see how to make your business more reliable, flexible, and allow it to better communicate.